



MEN'S FUTSAL: Liverpool 3-7 Leeds

Dominant visitors secure Christie glory

Liverpool fell to a 7-3 defeat against experienced opponents Leeds in the second game of their Christie Cup campaign. Their first match was a 4-4 draw with Manchester that had taken place earlier on Sunday afternoon.

The game began at high intensity, with Leeds scoring after less than two minutes. Danusz Pala was crowded out on the right-hand side, and Leeds were able to counter attack and score.

Mohamed Hafez, however, put Liverpool on level terms almost immediately with a low shot that beat the Leeds goalkeeper for pace.

After three minutes, Duc Anh Nguyen made a great block to deny a Leeds attacker, and then Pala shot just wide at the other end.

Leeds, though, were to score again after just four minutes. Their man never looked like missing as he went through one against one with Liverpool goalkeeper Talaz Alenezi.

It had been a frantic opening four minutes that had seen three goals; high-scoring even for Futsal.

The only question mark was over how long the two teams would be able to keep up this

intensity. Leeds used their experience to slow the game down from this moment on as they realised this was unlikely to be sustainable for the whole 40 minutes.

Pala produced some good technique with an overhead kick that sailed just wide of the target, before Leeds kept possession for a couple of minutes in an attempt to reduce the tempo.

A slight lull in intensity ensued as both sides took a collective breather with less than a third of the game gone. It was needed after a frenetic first period of the game.

Leeds – often using their goalkeeper as a fifth outfield player when in possession – were able to control the match and play it at their own pace. With an additional pair of legs provided by their sweeper-keeper, they moved the ball crisply and made Liverpool tire.

On 17 minutes, Alenezi was called into action as he produced a good save, before the Leeds goalkeeper shot from around the halfway mark. His effort went marginally wide of goal.

Kagiso Mello entered the field and equalised soon after. An initial shot was spilt by the Leeds goalkeeper – now back in his goal – before Mello tucked home to make it 2-2.



A scramble inside the Liverpool penalty area fell for a Leeds player to poke home on 20 minutes, and almost as soon as he had, the half-time whistle went, with the score at 3-2 to the visiting side.

After the interval, Hamza Hachimi went through one versus one but could not squeeze a shot past the Leeds goalkeeper, before Mello went around the keeper only to see his shot blocked last-gasp by a defender who just about made it back in time to prevent a certain goal.

A sustained period of play saw Liverpool under the cosh with Leeds dominant, but there was always the chance of a counter attack if the home team could play it right.

A certain foul from Munir Ghailan went unpunished with the referee wrong-sided, with Pala firing over just afterwards. The official would have been relieved to see Pala's effort fail to find the back of the net with Leeds understandably vocal in their protests.

On 28 minutes, Leeds made it 4-2 with a left-footed smash from the left-hand side of the pitch. Leeds had played against Manchester – winning that one 5-4 – immediately before this one and it should have been them who tired, but instead it was Liverpool, who were unable to maintain their high-energy start.

A great double-save from Alenezi kept Leeds at bay for a moment, but then 30 seconds later, it was 5-2.

Liverpool were guilty of forcing the play, under the pressure of knowing they needed goals with only ten minutes left, but nothing was coming off in the final third.

Ghailan hit a free-kick over the top of the crossbar, but Leeds used all of their experience to calm the game down.

They even managed to secure more goals, the first of which came with only five minutes remaining. A square pass caught Liverpool out, and the free Leeds attacker at the far post had the easiest possible task to slot into an unguarded goal.

It was made 7-2 two minutes later when Leeds countered effectively following a Liverpool corner. Alenezi was helpless as he was left exposed once more by those in front of him.

Nguyen got one goal back when Leeds' goalkeeper attempted one dribble too many. Nguyen won the ball from him and then rolled the ball into an empty net from ten yards.

Good work from Mello down the right-hand side led to Pala forcing the goalkeeper into a save, but the game was to end 7-3.

Leeds were comfortable victors on the day, winning both of their matches and deservedly so. They are the winners of the Futsal section of the Christie Cup 2018.

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